



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Ben Lomond Conservation Camp Fuel Reduction and Training Area Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Rancho San Vicente (Escarrilla), T9S, R3W, MDBM.	COUNTY	Santa Cruz
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Andrew Hubbs		
ADDRESS	6059 Highway 9 Felton, CA 95018	PHONE	(831) 335-6794

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of two parts; a fuel reduction component and a training component. In some cases, fuel reduction will occur as a result of training activities:

Fuel Reduction:

The fuel reduction portion is just over 100 acres and located on and just adjacent to the Ben Lomond Conservation Camp. A "shaded fuel break" prescription is proposed with the majority of understory vegetation thinned and the limbs of larger "leave" trees pruned up to lessen potential fire intensity and spread. Small diameter trees up to 12 inches DBH, and generally less than 6 inches DBH, will be felled and will not be utilized for commercial purposes. The felling of trees larger than 12 inches DBH may occur if deemed hazardous to buildings or crews by an RPF or certified arborist. All work will be completed by CAL FIRE hand crews and all slash will be pile burned, chipped or lopped-and-scattered. The work will be conducted intermittently over the next several years at various times of the year. Upon completion, potential fire intensity will be lessened near the Camp and adjacent infrastructure.

Training Areas:

- Fire Line Construction - CAL FIRE hand crews and engine companies will practice fire line construction over an approximate 100 acre area on both Ben Lomond conservation camp property and the adjacent San Vicente Redwoods property. This training involves using hand tools to cut an 8 -10' wide swath through shrub or grass dominated vegetation and "scraping" an approximate 4' wide swath through the middle of the aforementioned cleared area. These hand lines vary in length, typically ranging from 100 to 1000' in length. Immediately upon completion of line construction, crews will "rehab" areas by installing waterbars and pulling cut brush back over cut areas. No streams are known to occur in the training portion of the project area. Hand line construction training will occur over several years at various times of the year, but most typically in early to mid-spring as crews prepare for the coming fire season.
- Firing Methods - Within portions of the designated training areas, CAL FIRE hand crews and engine companies will practice firing methods by broadcast burning on up to 7 acres of grass dominated vegetation and up to 10 acres of shrub dominated vegetation. Blocks of 1 - 3 acres or less will be created utilizing existing roads and trails and/or by constructing handlines to act as containment lines prior to burning. In grass dominated vegetation, burning may occur annually from mid to late summer through the fall months. In shrub dominated areas, burns are planned to occur just one time in each "block" during the fall months when conditions are favorable.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- ☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- ☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture

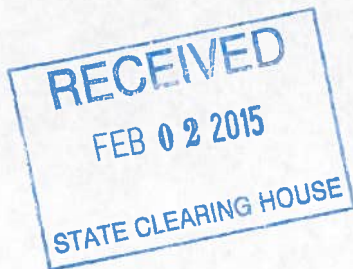


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and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING



Duane Shintaku 2/2/15

Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection